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# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS

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VOL. XXVII.

OCTOBER 25, 1912.

No. 43.

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## THE PLAGUE SITUATION.

*Philippine Islands.*—Reference was made last week to the occurrence of 7 cases of plague in Manila during June, July, and August. Between August 31 and September 7 three plague-infected rats were found. One of these was in the same block in which 3 of the human cases had occurred and 2 were in adjoining blocks. Deratization measures have been concentrated upon this and adjoining areas, the plan being to begin at the periphery some distance outside the known infected area and work toward the locality in which the plague rats were found. Attention is being given to the storage and collection of garbage, the rat proofing of premises, and the fumigation of sewers with sulphur.

In Iloilo 4 cases of plague occurred in man during the 2 weeks ended September 7. These were all in one house. This makes a total of 7 cases at Iloilo since July 5. A general rat-catching campaign has been in operation for some time, but so far no infected rat has been found. An outgoing quarantine has been established to prevent the disease being carried to other places on vessels.

The source of the plague infection in Manila and Iloilo has not been ascertained. It is possible that it was introduced from plague-infected Asiatic ports by rats in freight. The Philippine Islands import large quantities of foodstuffs from Asia, consisting among other things of potatoes, onions, and garlic in crates and baskets. Crated foodstuffs frequently harbor rats. As noted in the Public Health Reports last week Passed Asst. Surg. Creel found rats frequently in crated merchandise at San Juan, many of the rats being in crated garlic.

*Porto Rico.*—No case of plague in man or rodents has been reported in Porto Rico during the past week. The last reported case in man occurred at San Juan September 11. The last infected rodent was the one found at Arecibo October 15.

*Plague on vessel.*—September 3 a case of plague was reported at Hamburg on the steamship *Bellailsa*. Another patient fell ill off Cuxhaven and was placed in hospital at that port. The steamship *Bellailsa* had sailed July 2 from Rosario, Argentina, stopping en route at the Cape Verde Islands. The Hamburg authorities reported that the source of the infection appeared in all probability to be on board the vessel. The two patients referred to had occupied the same compartment on the ship. At Hamburg the vessel did not lie alongside of the wharf, but was unloaded in midstream. From Hamburg the vessel sailed to England, where it entered the river Tyne September 10.

On the same day a boy on the vessel was taken ill and removed to hospital. The patient died September 16 and the case was positively diagnosed as one of plague. No further cases have been reported.

*Russia.*—In Russia 55 cases of plague with 41 deaths were reported in the Government of Astrakhan between July 4 and September 8, 1912. These cases were mainly in the villages of Zavetnoye, Rahinka, and Djanibek, which have been officially declared infected with plague. Fifteen physicians have been sent from St. Petersburg to assist in the control of the disease and 10 medical students have gone to study its epidemiology under Prof. Taranuchin. The disease is still present. During September plague was also present in the village of Dschambeitin in the province of Uralsk.

*Azores.*—At Terceira 8 cases of plague were officially reported from September 11 to 24. As is usual when a disease like plague first breaks out in a locality, it may be expected that there have been many other cases which have escaped recognition. There have been rumors in shipping circles that the disease has been more prevalent than is indicated by the notified cases.

Immigrants recently arriving at United States ports from the Azores have made reference to the presence of plague on the island of Fayal. No official report of its occurrence has, however, as yet been received. The only steamship lines plying regularly between the Azores and the United States are the White Star and Fabre Lines, which stop at the Azores en route from Mediterranean ports. The ships of the former line go to Boston, and of the latter to Providence and New York. Occasionally other lines stop at the Azores en route to the United States. American whaling ships may also go directly from the Azores to New England ports, and at times in the spring, fishing schooners from the Azores touch New England ports en route to the Newfoundland banks. The ships of the regular lines usually stop for only a few hours at ports in the Azores and do not go alongside of the wharves. Passengers and freight are taken to the ships from the shore in tenders.

## CHOLERA.

*Quarantine precautions at Dairen and Port Arthur.*—Owing to the presence of cholera in certain Chinese ports the Chief of the Marine Bureau of the Kwantung Government issued a regulation during the latter part of August forbidding vessels from Hongkong, Amoy, Swatow, or Shanghai, and vessels touching at these ports, to unload fruits or vegetables at Dairen (Dalny) or Port Arthur until the fruits or vegetables were disinfected with a 1 to 1,000 solution of formalin. On September 2 a regulation was issued requiring the examination of the discharges of passengers and members of crews of all vessels arriving from Shanghai or via Shanghai before being allowed to land.

*China.*—In China cholera is spreading and the disease has appeared in a number of important ports, among which are Amoy, Hoihow, Nanking, Shanghai, and Swatow. At Shanghai the disease has also involved the foreign population, among whom seven cases were reported during the first week in September.